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# Economic Development

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E D U C A T I O N

O P P O R T U N I T Y



The City of El Paso must enter the next century with a viable plan to foster continued economic growth. This section of the plan includes five areas of economic development: (1) tourism, recreational and cultural development; (2) target industry development; (3) regional growth and development; (4) business and job development; and, (5) educational and workforce expansion. Our challenge for the future is to become the defining influence on border economic growth.

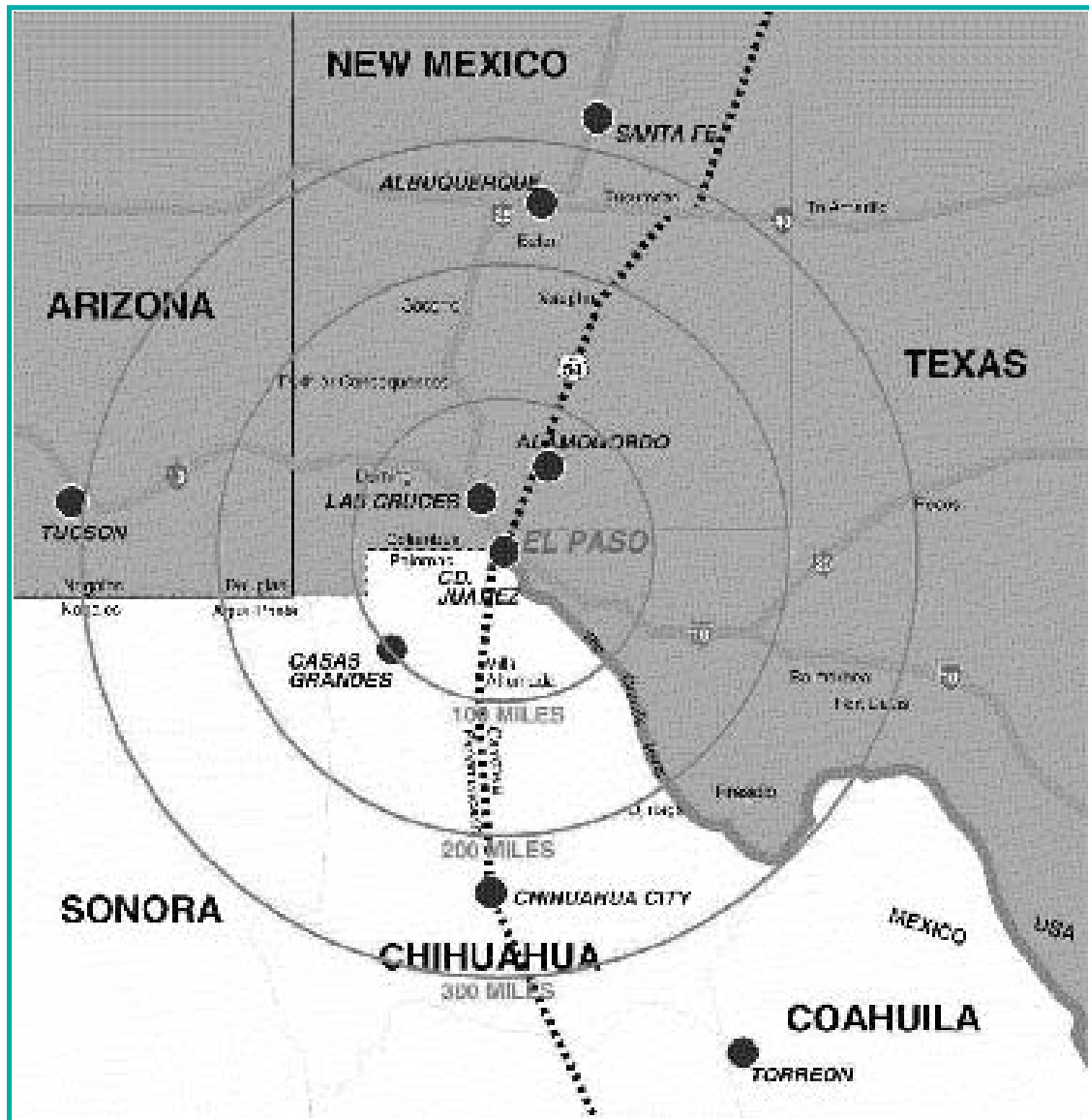
As the fourth largest City in the State of Texas and the seventeenth largest in the United States, El Paso's opportunities for economic growth are the key to area development. Sharing opportunities for regional development are the three states which help define the El Paso region: Texas, New Mexico and the State of Chihuahua in Mexico. All three share common denominators that impact the decisions made for the region.

## Primary Goal

**Focus economic development efforts which will lead to a strong and diversified economy, resulting in regional cooperation, quality jobs, ample economic opportunities, a well-educated and highly trained labor force and an expanded tax base.**

The El Paso region is quickly becoming an internationally competitive metroplex. In joint cooperative efforts, the sister cities of Juarez and El Paso are: marketing the area's robust economy, attracting diverse trade and commerce, providing an abundant labor force and increasing opportunities for business expansion. El Paso and the surrounding area have created the base for new economic opportunities with efforts for improved education and training, utilization of economic incentives, and the assurance that all commerce is important to the economic growth and stability of the region.

### City of El Paso Spheres of Economic Influence



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## Tourism, Recreational and Cultural Development

Tourism is the second largest revenue generating industry in El Paso and has the potential to grow into the largest industry in the City. Over \$31 billion dollars were generated for the State of Texas in 1998 by tourism; tourism revenue for 1999 is expected to surpass this amount. In the state, El Paso area attractions have the potential to develop into an affordable and enjoyable destination.

**GOAL:**           **CREATE AN AGGRESSIVE STRATEGIC PLAN WHICH PROMOTES EL PASO AS A TOURIST DESTINATION.**



**Above:** *Border Jumper Trolley at the Convention Center Downtown.*

Promoting and marketing the City is necessary for the survival of tourism. Creating a plan to promote the area's tourist attractions is essential to tap into tourism dollars. Abundant good weather, as well as our border location, establish the area as an ideal travel destination. The El Paso Convention and Visitor's Bureau proposes the following strategy for tourism: increase the hotel/motel occupancy rate for the area by targeting markets that can affect the City within a 300 mile radius; target spending to increase participation on "pro-area" planners and tour operators; concentrate on state groups for conventioner business, and develop a competitive image campaign to sell the area.

**POLICY:**           **Develop and promote the historic and cultural resources of El Paso and the surrounding area as tourist destinations.**

To effectively promote the area, an assessment—organized through the efforts of industry representatives and other stakeholders—needs to be conducted to identify and develop the historic and cultural resource needs of the area. After the assessment is complete, prioritizing of enhancement projects should include promotional activities and possible funding sources. Developing historic and cultural resources successfully and appropriately needs to be a priority. Adding new visitors' information centers at the bridges and at area attractions is an example of ways to enhance a tourist friendly zone.



**Above:** *Wilderness Park Museum in Northeast El Paso.*

**ACTION:**           **Support the development of cultural and historic tourism corridors which highlight El Paso's unique heritage.**



Above: San Elizario Mission.

Examples of these developments are the Mission Trail and the Old Fort Bliss/Hart's Mill area, both of which present wonderful opportunities for development. Other areas can be designated or created based on their unique characteristics and the facility needs of each in partnership with the private sector.

**ACTION:** Partner with Ciudad Juarez, Mexico to develop tourist friendly and safe corridors adjoining El Paso and Juarez and connecting the ports-of-entry.

**POLICY:** Emphasize tourism as a priority for generating income for the City.

The City of El Paso—known internationally for its friendly people and great climate—is the crossroads for interstate and international traffic. In 1998, an estimated 3 million visitors with an economic impact of \$723 million came into the area. The \$723 million represents the second largest industry for the area and will continue to grow as more emphasis is placed on tourism.

**ACTION:** Actively market El Paso, on a national and international level, as a tourist destination and international “Gateway to the Americas.”

**ACTION:** Create a comprehensive tour guide operator network to provide more effective use of attractions and facilities throughout the region.

Training and certification of guides and the services they provide needs to be monitored to protect both the City and its visitors. A bad experience can severely hamper the work many put into promoting the area. The network needs to be developed and conducted through the private sector and with the El Paso Convention and Visitor's Bureau.

**ACTION:** Identify cultural and historic sites throughout the City that can benefit from enhancement efforts.

The Camino Real, Butterfield and Mission Trails all are examples of historic sites that should be developed and continually enhanced for tourism dollars as well as for the enjoyment of future generations. The Rio Grande, with its designation as an American Heritage River, is another site that will benefit from enhancement efforts such as a riverwalk and other clean up efforts. Tri-lateral agreements with El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, and Las Cruces should also be established to allow joint-use initiatives in the enhancement efforts.

**ACTION:** Promote El Paso's multicultural identity to enhance its attractiveness to visitors and tourists.

**POLICY:** Stimulate new sports and recreational facilities and program development that will attract visitors to the area.



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El Paso is an ideal location for outdoor sporting events and festivals. Sports tourism is a natural match for the climate and setting of the region. Developing strategies to market the area for these activities is essential along with planning for the needed facilities to host these events. Creation of new golf courses, softball/baseball fields, soccer fields, and tennis courts to market for local, regional, national and even international competitions must be incorporated into the expansion process. Other facilities can be constructed to complement these new developments. A good example is the creation of additional recreational vehicle parks located near new sports facilities.

**ACTION:**      **Support the efforts of a sports tourism council to help establish growth in the sports industry.**

A sports tourism council will be necessary to foster the growth of sports tourism in El Paso. Leadership responsibility for this action must come from a public-private entity that secures the area's commitment and participation in sporting events. The council will also be important in the creation and expansion of additional area sports facilities.

**ACTION:**      **Support El Paso's film commission to further enhance the ability to draw more films/commercials using the area's cultural and natural resources.**

The film commission has made significant contributions to the economic impact of the area when groups produce films in our region. The City also receives additional advertising and national exposure when these films are viewed.



*Above: Filming on location in the Harts Mills area of Central El Paso.*

**POLICY:**      **Support El Paso's artists, art organizations, and institutions for their significant contributions to the City's economic growth.**

Tourists visiting an area spend time in museums enjoying regional art as a cultural experience. Developing facilities for artists that are affordable, while providing incentives for new development and redevelopment for inclusion of public art, are important to the area's economic growth.

## Target Industry Development

The unique partnership El Paso and Ciudad Juarez have has stimulated the expansion of trade and manufacturing in the region while contributing to economic growth. Utilizing the abundant labor pool and small business base as tools for economic growth, the City needs to target industries and commerce that will fit into its growth pattern. The Industrial Market map contained in the **Map Atlas**, for example, shows the strong regional connections between industrial areas in El Paso and Juarez. These industrial sites are areas that already drive a portion of the region's economy. Efforts to continue accommodating industry in different

areas of the City can only benefit the region. Additionally, this map contains areas designated as special incentive zones throughout El Paso. The different incentives allowed in these are described in more detail in both this section and in the **Implementation Chapter** of *The Plan*.

**GOAL:**        **ENCOURAGE THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TARGET INDUSTRIES WHICH FOSTER ECONOMIC GROWTH VIA BETTER WAGES AND BENEFITS, TRAINING, AND PROMOTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.**

Every effort should be made to retain and expand industry while promoting growth industries such as health care, metals manufacturing, and trucking. El Paso's continuing development as a regional health care hub has resulted in the current efforts to establish a border health institute by 2001.



**Above:** Industrial employees.

**POLICY:** Expand El Paso's economic base by capitalizing on market opportunities in regional, national, and international markets.

Establishing El Paso and the region as an economically growing area can help to attract new industry to the region. Working to develop new incentives and initiatives are vital to creating new market opportunities nationally and abroad. El Paso will continue to foster a pro-business approach to economic development, one that coordinates the efforts of government and the private sector, to increase economic prosperity. Increasing business growth by continuing and expanding current incentives, enlarging and supporting the economic development departments of the City and chambers, working with local educational institutions in the progression of new ideas and education,

and the endorsement of area government, all foster a friendly and inviting atmosphere for business and industry growth.

**ACTION:**        **Support those maquila industries which will locate to the border to create jobs in the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez region.**

The maquiladora plants in Ciudad Juarez presently number approximately 330 and employ nearly 200,000 workers. The maquila designation permits the temporary, duty free importation of capital equipment and machinery as well as the materials for production. This arrangement allows for continued growth and expansion in both the City of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. Ongoing review and reassessing of current policies and actions must be maintained to support the maquila industry.

**POLICY:**        **Target those economic sectors in which El Paso can create and sustain a competitive advantage for economic growth and job creation.**

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Ongoing studies of the region's competitive advantage in different industrial segments is needed to create or reinforce industrial development clusters.

**ACTION:        Develop a health science and medical research facility in the region.**

A health science and medical research facility located in the City can gain from our strategic location on the border and help to promote economic growth. By establishing such a structure, related support facilities such as schools and research centers can also be attracted to the area. These facilities can serve the public need for quality medical attention and foster economic growth.

**POLICY:        Provide economic incentives which will assist new industries in locating in the El Paso region.**

These incentives include tax abatements, Empowerment zones, Foreign trade zones, State Enterprise zones and other pro-business incentives.

**ACTION:        Provide adequate infrastructure and support services for the industries which currently exist and those which can be recruited to the City.**

**ACTION:        Seek out and utilize effective recruitment strategies, such as tax abatements, bonds, grants, empowerment and foreign trade zones, as needed, to recruit new industries to the City and generate new economic development opportunities.**

## Regional Growth and Development

El Paso, Texas and Ciudad Juarez, Mexico have established the initial groundwork to develop the region as an international trade center. The El Paso-Juarez World Trade Center, and the Economic Development Departments of each city, along with the local Chambers of Commerce, have joined together to market the City to national and international clients. Plans to create new infrastructure and develop incentives for creating a compelling climate for business and industry are part of regional strategies.

**GOAL:            DEVELOP EL PASO AS AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE CENTER.**

Establishing the true "Gateway to the Americas" through this area is an integral part of the process of attracting new, and retaining existing, commerce. Additionally, sponsorship of trade delegations to foreign countries will aid in the creation of an international trade center.

**POLICY:        Establish a bi-national, tri-state partnership with Ciudad Juarez, Mexico and New Mexico to promote the smooth flow of communication and commerce throughout the region, creating a seamless border for trade and economic expansion.**

As the tri-state partnership evolves and the two nations establish partnership parameters, creation of a seamless border for the region will help in the development of an international trade center and related facilities. A seamless border will facilitate commerce across the border region and will help in attracting new development while establishing and maintaining existing businesses.

**ACTION:** Establish an efficient communications network among El Paso, Ciudad Juarez, Mexico, and New Mexico to promote the retention of business and profits in the region.

**POLICY:** Foster a positive environment for international trade development, small business growth, and the continual expansion and retention of the City's existing business and industrial base.

Commerce is the key to economic growth for the El Paso region. A supportive environment for

such growth is an important component to incorporate to aid international trade, small business growth, and the expansion/retention of the City's existing industries. Establishing firm bi-national commitments on free trade and commerce will enhance international trade. Continued reassessment of current economic programs and City goals is necessary to determine area needs.



**ACTION:** Establish and create a regional border development organization to implement economic development strategies.

**ACTION:** Identify and respond to workforce needs of employers in the region.

**ACTION:** Promote more efficient border traffic trade by supporting initiatives aimed at streamlining services at point-of-entry.

Initiatives such as the addition of dedicated commuter lanes for smoother border traffic flow, expanded federal immigration and inspection staff for automobile and commercial activities, and an increased number of inspection booths are all aimed at more efficient border traffic flow. These types of initiatives should be actively pursued.

**POLICY:** Promote economic development strategies which foster the creation of international trade and commerce throughout the region.

Promoting El Paso as a marketplace for new businesses is essential for continued growth. The establishment of a coalition which could develop such strategies would allow true representation by all parties who benefit from the results. Representation of elected officials, chambers of commerce, the El Paso-Juarez World Trade Center, business leaders, state agencies, and national agencies would be a good start to the coalition along with representatives from Juarez and the surrounding area. A step in the right direction was the February 1998 Border Economic Conference that helped define the goals for a stronger border alliance on economic issues.



**ACTION:** Encourage the expansion of foreign trade zones, international banking, customs brokerage houses, warehousing and manufacturing to support trade and commerce in the region.

**ACTION:** Support the commercial spaceport initiative in Southern New Mexico.

**POLICY:** Recruit and retain industries which optimize regional interaction and contribute to regional integration of sustainable economic activities.



New business recruitment is of vital importance to the region, but recruited industries should be compatible with the region's resources. A large trainable workforce and an accessible trucking industry are regional strengths; those industries utilizing solar applications may also be attracted to the area. The retention of small businesses in the City is also important. Statistics indicate that most of the jobs within the El Paso community are created by small businesses. In fact, 75% of all workers in El Paso are employed by small businesses within the City. As such, they are a vital part of our local economy, which together, provide a framework for future innovation and entrepreneurship. Although small business is not an industry, per se, they play a major role in servicing the needs of larger industries, contributing to the region's economic strength.

*Left: Greater El Paso Chamber of Commerce promotional material.*

**POLICY:** Promote and market the City as a regional center for wholesale trade, high-tech manufacturing and professional services.

**ACTION:** Improve and maintain the transportation systems and infrastructure to encourage economic development.

Improvements should include the maintenance of roads and railways while completing additional new infrastructure. The additions of new ports-of-entry and an intermodal facility are and will be needed to continue to foster economic growth.

**ACTION:** Support the development and expansion of World Trade Center facilities in El Paso, and Ciudad Juarez.

## *Case Study: The Intermodal Transportation Hub*

### **Background**

Global trade liberalization—encapsulated by the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), among others—has opened the door for trading on a worldwide scale. El Paso is now the 17<sup>th</sup> largest city in the United States and may rise to the position of 15<sup>th</sup> by the year 2000. The strategic position of the El Paso/Ciudad Juarez metropolitan area on the United States/Mexico international boundary results in an ideal location for a state-of-the-art major international rail crossing. The area is centrally located between the Pacific and Gulf Coasts with connections to major transportation routes serving the global economic transportation network.

The El Paso/Ciudad Juarez metroplex is served by two rail crossings dating from the 1890's with two vehicular ports of entry reconstructed in 1967 between the



two downtown areas of the twin cities. Today, the combined El Paso/Juarez population is 1.8 million. The growing population, accompanied by greater densities of development occurring in the core areas of both communities, has resulted in traffic congestion, major increases in pedestrian crossings, and rail congestion within the narrow downtown corridor designated for vehicular and rail transportation between El Paso and Ciudad Juarez. By the year 2010, the combined metropolitan population—including Dona Ana County in New Mexico—is expected to climb to over 2.8 million residents.

### **The Problem**

Improvements must be made to accommodate the expected growth in rail, truck, and pedestrian traffic. Importantly, the need to improve rail connections between the two countries—to decrease the time necessary for delivery of goods, to decrease traffic

congestion and to facilitate intermodal transportation movements for greater efficiency—is vital for the growing metroplex. Regional exports and imports passing through the metroplex have steadily risen in the last seven years and the trend is expected to continue.

Economic development has been encouraged through the establishment of free trade zones, state enterprise zones, and individual reinvestment zones. These contribute to the desirability of the area for industrial development and job growth. In addition, the maquila industry constitutes a significant portion of all United States-

Mexico trade.

There are approximately 300 maquiladoras in the region and they employ more than 183,000 Mexican workers. Of these, more than 70 are



owned and operated by Fortune 500 companies from the United States. Additionally, more than 20 Japanese corporations have established maquila operations, along with a number of European and Taiwanese firms.

The maquila industry also exerts a significant positive impact on El Paso's economy. More than 11,000 direct jobs have been created in El Paso in such areas as warehousing, distribution, and capital-intensive manufacturing. According to the Federal Reserve Bank—El Paso Division, the maquila's growing reliance on the "Just-In-Time" delivery concept, has prompted a need for suppliers to move into the area, generating more than 25,000 indirect jobs in support industries. Over the past decade, El Paso's industrial real estate market has absorbed an average of approximately 2 million square feet per year, largely due to growth in U.S.-Mexico production sharing with Santa Teresa, New Mexico adding over 650,000 square feet of industrial space since the 1980's, as well.

*These factors require improved and timely delivery of components and products to maintain and support the continued expansion of the El Paso economy within a global framework. In order to provide for this economic expansion, El Paso has been researching the feasibility of the development of an intermodal transportation hub in the region.*

**A Solution: El Paso Hub Feasibility Study**

*In June, 1998 the El Paso Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) sponsored a study to determine the feasibility of implementing and operating an intermodal transportation hub in the El Paso Urban Transportation Study (EPUTS) area. The study (The El Paso Hub Feasibility*



*Study) determined that a hub is, indeed, feasible for the area. More specifically, it determined that land just east of the airport and adjacent to Biggs Field was the most logical site for such a hub for the following reasons:*

- *full Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) support for air cargo operations;*
- *benefits to Ft. Bliss such as improved rapid deployment facilities and attracting aerospace companies which can provide local support to weapons systems;*
- *major road access corridors available;*
- *low cost for infrastructure development, and,*
- *federal funding available for hub development at the airport.*

**Project Benefits**

*The benefits of an intermodal transportation hub for the El Paso region could be significant. Linking air, rail and truck operations in one centralized location will assist with the creation of a near-seamless transportation connection in which innovation, flexibility and rapid response—elements essential to economic success—will result.*

*With global markets and international sourcing becoming increasingly important in economic development, access to intermodal transportation is becoming more*



*commonplace for manufacturers and distributors. An intermodal transportation hub will allow industries throughout the region to transport goods to any location worldwide. Additionally, the hub will improve Fort Bliss' ability to rapidly deploy troops and equipment for military purposes. Locating the hub in the vicinity of the airport may also allow for the relocation of the downtown railyards, thus creating the opportunity for major redevelopment, economic development and investment opportunities in the downtown area.*

*Synergy between transportation carriers translates into savings for manufacturers and distributors. Besides aiding El Paso economically, an intermodal hub will help reduce highway congestion, fuel consumption, pollution and accidents. However, for all of these benefits to occur, there must also be synergy between the public and private sectors. Cooperation among all stakeholders within the metroplex is vital for the fruition and success of an intermodal hub and that success equates to the creation of jobs, industry, regional cooperation and positive growth for the City and the entire metroplex area.*



## Business and Job Development

The El Paso economy, through private enterprise, has seen its growth process continue as a result of an expanding manufacturing industry, considerable increases in retail sales and small business retention, and the ongoing success of maquiladora-related industries and support services.

**GOAL:**        **CREATE A POSITIVE-BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT WHICH SUPPORTS EXISTING BUSINESSES AND ENCOURAGES NEW BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH, ENTREPRENEURSHIP, AND PUBLIC / PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS.**

Incentives designed to utilize regional natural resources have allowed the City to take an active role in attracting commerce to the region. Actions of the Department of Economic Development of the City of El Paso, in conjunction with the economic departments of each of the local chambers of commerce, has helped to facilitate growth in the small business area. Information and data to start and assist new businesses in the region has been a strong asset in the area's business recruitment efforts. The University of Texas at El Paso

(UTEP) and its School of Business Administration have provided additional support. El Paso has shown that it can readily adapt and service the needs of various industries. The plastic injection molding industry is a good example of El Paso's adapting to the needs of an industry. El Paso made available its vast labor pool, along with economic incentives, to create new opportunities in this field. The industry took advantage of the labor pool for its employment needs and established itself as a strong economic partner for the City and region.



*Below: Convention Bureau.*

**POLICY:**        **Develop new partnerships and support those which already exist between the public, private, and non-profit sectors to address the City's economic needs and strengths.**

The cooperative efforts between the public, private, and non-profit sectors allowed the area to target concerns that hinder economic growth. These efforts should be continued to find solutions to our economic concerns quickly and efficiently. Targeting the needs and strengths of the area can help to develop and establish these partnerships.

**ACTION:**        **Develop business incentives to draw new industrial and commercial developments to El Paso and the area.**

**ACTION:**        **Create an intermodal transportation hub to facilitate transportation linkages and enhance the marketability to the area.**

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Without a multi-modal transportation network, utilities, and supporting public services, a community would not be able to accommodate either redevelopment or new development. Utilizing a multi-modal transportation network for businesses to transport goods and parts to markets, and provide an efficient network for employees to get to employment centers needs to be addressed for economic development to occur. Additionally, light rail and intelligent highway system options must be available for later integration. Studies for the continued improvements in new technology need to be explored and included where applicable.

**POLICY:**      **Encourage relationships between economic development entities, business and educational institutions to strengthen the region's ability to attract desired businesses.**

A regional approach in encouraging the development of new commerce should include the expertise and resources provided by the local educational institutions such as The University of Texas at El Paso, El Paso Community College, Texas Tech Health Science Center, U.T. Houston School of Public Health and the Texas A&M Agricultural Extension Center. Additionally, Fort Bliss along with local and state government departments, chambers of commerce, and area citizens should have input in determining the direction the region should take in attracting new commerce through cooperative efforts.

**ACTION:**      **Aggressively pursue governmental, private and public sector funding which provide assistance for non-profit businesses, workforce development, job training and retraining and small business development.**

**ACTION:**      **Pursue retention and expansion of military presence in area with continued communication and joint efforts between the military and the City of El Paso.**

*Below: Fort Bliss maneuvers.*

For fiscal year 1998, the economic impact of the U.S. military in El Paso was estimated at over one billion dollars. This figure exemplifies the significant impact of the military in the region and how it is important that the region strengthen intra- and inter-governmental commitments. Continued cooperation in economic growth decisions for the area needs to be in partnership with key entities such as the military base.

Additional support from local, state, and national legislature should be monitored to ensure growth and stability for the military presence. Joint cooperative projects, such as the development of Castner Range, support of Desert Sands, progression of a multi-modal facility, and continued discussions of utilizing Biggs Field need to be seen as important to the area's economic vitality.



**POLICY:**      **Sustain the existing economic base by providing adequate land and infrastructure to make area sites attractive to businesses willing to invest.**

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New businesses to the region will look at land availability and existing infrastructure as factors in their decisions to locate to the area. The City and region must examine the patterns of growth and make appropriate decisions for progress to continue.

**POLICY:**        **Create a positive business climate to attract new business with emphasis on the region’s positive customer service/support with local businesses and area government.**

The business of attracting new industries needs to be a priority for area growth. The City, along with the other sectors, must create a positive climate for economic growth. Information and assistance have been developed within the City’s Economic Development Department and Chambers of Commerce to help facilitate a pro-business approach. Incentives created to foster a positive business environment and draw new business have already been established. These include:

- A Tax Abatement Program
- The Texas Enterprise Zone Program
- Foreign Trade Zone
- Industrial Revenue Bonds
- The SBA 504 Loan Program
- The Smart Jobs Fund Program
- The Federal Enterprise Community Program
- Federal Empowerment Zone

The Industrial Markets map in the **Map Atlas** contains special incentives areas. Within each of these areas, special incentives exist that allow different industries to benefit from locating, operating or hiring within these areas. Brief descriptions of these zones follow with more detail provided in the **Implementation Chapter**.

A foreign trade zone (FTZ) is a site within the U.S., in or near a U.S. Customs port of entry, where foreign and domestic merchandise is allowed to enter without a formal Customs entry or the payment of Customs duties or government excise taxes. FTZ activity fosters economic growth in the area. The Texas Enterprise Zone Program provides municipal and state sales tax and corporate franchise tax incentives. The zone’s purpose is to enhance employment opportunities by stimulating private investment. The Federal Enterprise Community is comprised of 12.5 square miles in the Northeast and Lower Valley. A Federal Tax credit reduced the federal tax liability for private, for profit employers hiring youth who reside in the designated area. Enterprise zones target specific areas for revitalization by providing them with social and economic development services. The Empowerment Zone designation targets areas for economic revitalization and redevelopment. The Empowerment Zone emphasizes economic opportunity, human development, and sustainable neighborhoods. Other areas targeted include industrial parks.

**ACTION:**        **Develop an aggressive marketing strategy which will aid in the pursuit of attracting new businesses and work in conjunction with the marketing strategy implemented by the Convention and Visitor’s Bureau.**

**ACTION:**        **Streamline the permitting and development review process for new businesses locating in El Paso.**



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## Educational and Workforce Development

**GOAL:**        **PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES AT ALL LEVELS TO ALLOW CHILDREN AND ADULTS TO REACH THEIR FULLEST POTENTIAL TO ENHANCE THE CITY'S WORKFORCE SKILLS.**

The City cannot falter in support of its educational system. By providing improved educational opportunities, El Paso may benefit by improving its educational levels, improving employability and income levels; fostering community pride; attracting economic opportunity; and providing a research base to develop business and industry. This, in turn, will help to provide a greater quality of life for the entire community.

**Below:** *Students at the UTEP School of Business Administration.*



**POLICY:**        **Support programs which encourage the completion of high school, or its equivalent, for all residents of the City.**

**ACTION:**        **Aggressively promote and support high school retention programs throughout the City.**

The National Education Association has identified many reasons why students leave school prior to graduation including environmental, academic experience, physiological needs, and social factors. Environmental factors include family economic needs, low parental education levels, lack of family support for continued education, conditions surrounding migrant lifestyles, and lack of interpersonal relationships supportive of remaining in school. Poor academic performance, learning difficulties, authority conflicts, and negative responses to a school atmosphere account for academic experience factors related to recidivism. Physiological and social factors, respectively, include the need for a stable income source, marriage or pregnancy and factors related to drugs, alcohol, or interactions with the legal system. Any efforts to improve the educational system's ability to retain students through graduation should address these issues.

**POLICY:**        **Support a wide variety of job skill training programs that provide stable, higher paying job opportunities to residents at different skill levels.**

The ever changing working environment makes it necessary to provide job skill training programs which will allow our workforce to keep up-to-date on the latest training and technological advances. Such training may take several forms; three of the most common forms of training are vocational and industrial, including the obtaining of associate degrees; advanced education, including the obtaining

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of four-year and graduate degrees, and continuing education, for those wishing to remain up to date in a given field. Vocational training and re-training for displaced workers should also be offered so that residents have the option to continue working and re-establish themselves, when necessary, into jobs which will provide them with opportunities for stability, growth and improved employment options.

**ACTION:        Support literacy programs including the expansion of library resources.**

The library network serves as a depository for the literature of our culture, and provides a research base for those studying both specialized and general subjects. The City library branches offer a fairly comprehensive reference service, a wide choice of books, and multi-media products which supplement the resources of the local branches. Local branches should be dispersed between major branches to provide book lending service and limited reference service to well established residential districts.

**POLICY:        Encourage higher education institutions in the El Paso area to provide a variety of new educational programs.**

There are many institutions which provide educational opportunities for residents in the El Paso region. The El Paso Community College (EPCC) offers Associate Degrees or Certificates of Compliance in 130 programs, as well as non-credit programs such as Continuing Education, and English as a Second Language. EPCC currently has four campuses and two central service centers. Institutions which offer four-year college degrees include: The University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), Park College on Fort Bliss, New Mexico State University in Las Cruces, New Mexico, the University of Juarez, Mexico and several specialized colleges in Ciudad Juarez. Three other institutions—Texas Tech Regional Academic Health Center, Texas A & M Extension Campus, and Webster University at Fort Bliss and Santa Teresa, New Mexico—offer research services and facilities for specific types of post-graduate education, but do not offer associate degrees or four-year degrees.

**ACTION:        Encourage and help to increase the training capabilities of local colleges and universities, including increasing the types of graduate programs and degrees offered.**

**ACTION:        Support local colleges and universities in increasing their research capabilities in areas that will benefit the residents of El Paso and the United States/Mexico border region, both socially and economically.**